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Govt to cull labour brokers

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Johannesburg - Plans are underway to review the laws that regulate labour brokers, Labour Minister Membathisi Mdladlana said on Wednesday.

"The exploitation of workers by labour brokers may soon be a thing of the past as plans are afoot to review the laws that regulate labour brokers," the minister said in a statement.

This followed research commissioned by the department of labour which indicated that employees engaged through brokers were paid significantly less than those who were directly hired by employers.

Reacting earlier this year to the findings of the research, Mdladlana described labour broking as "a form of human trafficking".

"It is an extreme form of free market capitalism which reduces workers to commodities that can be traded for profit as if they were meat or vegetables.

"The agenda of labour brokers is pro-employer and anti-trade unionism," the minister said at the time.

Announcing his latest plans on Wednesday, Mdladlana said employees hired through labour brokers must enjoy the same rights and protection as any other workers.

"Our labour laws need to be re-evaluated to ascertain the extent to which they provide employees with decent work, in line with the national strategic objectives," he said.

The laws likely to be amended to regulate labour brokers were the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997, the Employment Equity Act of 1998 and the Labour Relations Act of 1995, the statement said.

The matter was being tabled at the National Economic Development and Labour Council for consideration by the social partnership of government, employers and organised labour, the statement added.

-Sapa